

The Christian News-Letter

No. 233

Edited by
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May 2nd, 1945

DEAR MEMBER,

Among the multitude of tributes to President Roosevelt none brings out more clearly the religious faith which underlay his political ideas and inspired his life-work than an article in *The Tablet*, which recalls a number of the memorable passages in his long series of speeches.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT

Here was a man, filling the highest public office and wielding unprecedented power, who saw with penetrating clarity the inseparable connection between what he called the three "indispensable institutions" of religion, democracy and international good faith. Religion, he declared, was the source of the other two. "The defence of religion, of democracy and of good faith among nations is all the same fight. To save one we must now make up our minds to save all." That was spoken in January, 1939.

Three years later his message to Congress contained this passage: "We are fighting, as our fathers have fought, to uphold the doctrine that all men are equal in the sight of God. . . . That is the conflict that day and night now pervades our lives. No compromise can end that conflict. There never has been—there never can be—successful compromise between good and evil."

For him military victory was only the necessary means to greater ends. The real fight to which his life was dedicated was the preservation and extension of democracy, understood as "a covenant between free men to respect the rights and liberties of their fellows," and international good faith, springing from "the will of civilized nations of men to respect the rights and liberties of other nations of men." And the foundation of both he knew to be man's relation to God, from which he derives a sense both of his own dignity and of a corresponding dignity of his fellow-men which he is under obligation to respect.

THE HORRORS OF GERMAN CONCENTRATION CAMPS

Men and women everywhere who have not lost the feelings of decency normal to human beings have been sickened by the disclosure of what has been going on in German concentration camps. We have been given a glimpse into hell which, in another sense from

Milton's, has left "her dolorous mansions to the peering day," and we start back in horror.

Universal as is the cry of indignation, we may easily miss the full significance of these revelations. We are confronted with an evil which will not be brought to an end when the surviving victims have been liberated and those who tortured them have been punished as they deserve. The evil goes far deeper than its local manifestations. These crimes are not simply the acts of depraved individuals, but the inevitable issue of a scheme of life deliberately adopted by men who have said, "Evil, be thou my good." They have chosen this way of life with full knowledge where it leads. They have imbued large bodies of youth with a fanatical belief in this perversion of all human values. The leaders of National Socialism know that they have lost the war. It is probable that their policy is already being directed primarily to the post-war situation, with a view to creating in Europe conditions of unrest and turmoil in which there is a likelihood of the prizes going to the most reckless and unscrupulous.

The lesson which these horrors ought to burn into our minds is that the real fight is against Satanic powers that possess and corrupt the soul of man and seek nothing less than universal dominion.

But that is not all. The difference between the votaries of unbridled power and those who cherish the democratic values of liberty, law and toleration is so fundamental that even this war is not too high a price to pay to decide the issue. But it is sheer delusion to suppose that the dividing line in the real struggle runs straight and clear between the embattled forces. Each cause has allies in the opposing camp. The web of sin is all of one piece. When its most hideous manifestations strike us in the face we recoil in horror, but the corruption from which they spring has a lodgment in ourselves. All pride, selfishness and callous indifference to the needs of others, wherever they are found, are a siding with the enemies of Christ. We especially need to remind ourselves of this when we encounter revolting wickedness. We are then more than ever in danger of externalizing and localizing evil by identifying it with those guilty of these particular abominations. We thereby allow ourselves to be diverted from our primary task of fighting evil where it most directly concerns us—in ourselves, in our immediate environment and in our own national life.

Even for the infamy of German concentration camps we cannot wholly divest ourselves of responsibility. The inhumanity and torture that were being practised in them were known in this country in the years before the war. A few courageous individuals raised their protest and did what they could to succour the victims. But the public as a whole was apathetic and the disposition in

influential quarters was to hush things up. Our own lack of moral passion contributed to the rank growth of barbarism.

THE AMERICAN CHURCHES AND THE PEACE

In the life of the American Churches there have been important happenings in the past few months of which we ought to be fully aware.

The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America set up more than two years ago a very strong Commission of leading American thinkers, under the chairmanship of Professor R. L. Calhoun, to consider the relation of the Church to the war in the light of the Christian faith. The Commission has just produced its report, which is an exceptionally thorough bit of work and a notable contribution to the understanding of some of the fundamental problems of the relation of Christians to secular society.

Of still wider significance is the attention which the American Churches have given to questions relating to the peace. They have devoted greater thought to this matter, and have taken more vigorous and concerted action to educate public opinion on certain issues, than have the Churches of this country. This may be explained in part by the fact that this country has been longer exposed to the strain of war and that heavier demands have been made on all sections of the community, including those whose business it is to think and teach; in part, also, by the fact that, if any one had been asked two years ago to name the Christian leaders who were taking the most prominent part in thinking about the international future, he would probably at once have mentioned William Temple, William Paton and W. T. Elmslie, and that all of these have been removed at the height of their powers and in the full flood of their energies. On their side, the American Churches have been fortunate in having in the Federal Council a strong and well-staffed central organ of inter-Church co-operation which has been steadily developed under the able guidance of Dr. Samuel McCrea Cavert, through a long period of years; fortunate also, in the particular matter of the relation of the Churches to the peace, that they were able to secure as Chairman of the Commission on this subject Mr. John Foster Dulles, who not only had direct and wide experience of dealing with international affairs, but was able to devote a substantial part of his energies to the task entrusted to him.

The representative Commission set up in 1940 produced early in 1943 a report setting forth "Six Pillars of Peace," which we published as a Supplement (C.N.-L. No. 179). The Commission has continued its work on these foundations. In January of this year it convened a national Conference at Cleveland, attended by nearly five hundred delegates, thoroughly representative of the Church life of America. We print as a Supplement part of the striking

address to the Conference by Mr. Dulles. It will be evident from the date of its delivery that it was prior to the Crimea Conference.

The Conference gave prolonged consideration to the tentative proposals for an international organization agreed upon at Dumbarton Oaks. It commended these proposals to the consideration of the Churches, because they were the only plan which Governments had thus far evolved, and consequently the only available index to the extent of agreement that is now possible, and because they provided for continuing international consultation and collaboration; proposing at the same time certain amendments with a view to their improvement.

The conclusions of the Conference were not those of a private group or transient gathering. The Federal Council of Churches provides the machinery by which they can be brought to the attention of every congregation of the co-operating Churches throughout the length and breadth of America. Mr. Dulles was able to claim in his address to the Conference that through the nation-wide activity of the Churches the insistence in the earlier report on the need for a world organisation had brought the importance of this issue home to millions of American citizens and powerfully contributed to the swell of public opinion which enabled the political leaders to move in this direction.

What is noteworthy is the degree in which the American Churches have succeeded in combining two things which are necessary to an effective Christian influence on public opinion. They have been able, first, to promote thinking of very high quality about major political issues, and, secondly, to use the machinery of the Federal Council and of the individual denominations for the widest dissemination of the results throughout the nation.

The outstanding thing in the address of Mr. Dulles is that he unites a deep and firm attachment to what is best in American idealism with a strong grasp of the realities of the international situation. This is evident throughout the address, and notably in the four principles of conduct which he lays down as necessary to bring international collaboration out of the realm of theory into that of reality. These four principles were adopted by the Conference as part of its own conclusions. Charged with the responsibility of giving a lead to Christian opinion in America, Mr. Dulles could hardly have used his great opportunity to larger advantage. He was able to carry such conviction to a large, representative assembly that they adopted his enunciation of principles without even verbal change. It is not often that it is possible to give so decisive a swing to Christian opinion on a critical issue.

Yours sincerely,

W. A. Dean

AMERICA'S RÔLE IN THE PEACE

Part of the opening address by MR. JOHN FOSTER DULLES at the Cleveland Conference, convened in January, 1945, by the Commission of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America on a Just and Durable Peace.

When in March, 1943, our Commission issued the "Six Pillars of Peace," our first and basic Pillar spoke of *continuing* collaboration between the United Nations we were confident that, under the impact of common peril, a procedure for collaboration would be found, so that the main problem of peace would be to perpetuate and universalize a living thing. For a brief span, our confidence appeared to have been justified. Now, it appears, we have failed to consummate that first and easier step.

THE NECESSITY AND CONDITIONS OF INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

The fact is that this nation has not yet adjusted itself to the working conditions of collaboration. A majority of our people now accept, in the abstract, the proposition that international trouble anywhere is of potential concern to us. They agree that, since this is so, it logically follows that our Government ought to take a responsible part in dealing with troubles elsewhere. But, actually, they inspire our Government with fears that it cannot collaborate and still retain the confidence of the people.

Many prefer to see our Government stand aloof, and utter lofty pronouncements which pander to their sense of moral superiority. Under such conditions, Government is not disposed to work in such mire as much of the world is to-day. It is afraid of the criticism which will be heaped upon it when it comes back with some of the mire adhering to its hands and feet.

We are hesitant about giving or accepting collaboration with reference to the hard problems that daily present themselves. We like collaboration as an idea. We fear it as a reality. In consequence, there has developed a sort of tacit understanding with our allies. They will give us world co-operation on paper—which is the way we like it. In return, we will drop out of the actual practice of collaboration, leaving each a free hand in its area of special interest.

It is time for the American people to arouse themselves. They have become pleasurably immersed in an intellectual pastime. Throughout the nation men are devising ingenious formulae to deal with voting on a hypothetical Security Council and for dealing with the relative control of the President and the Congress over the American member on that Council. These matters may be important, but they will be important only if we first make sure that we are doing something more real than playing with words. There is much risk that, as things now stand, the Dumbarton Oaks Proposals will never be more than words.

The only way to eliminate that risk is to bring our Government now to practise international collaboration. Our Government ought to participate actively in the decisions now being taken in Europe, decisions which, more than any security organization, will determine whether there is to be a third world war.

But, it will be asked, is this still possible? Will our collaboration be accepted? Can we now recapture the agreement of Moscow? I do not doubt that we can—under certain conditions.

One condition is that our co-operation be implemented by the most competent and experienced Americans who are available. Collaboration, to be acceptable, must be skilled. Also, that collaboration must be put on a sustained, rather than sporadic, basis. The objective is to prevent crises, not merely to try to solve them.

Another condition is that our co-operation be conciliatory and understanding of the ideals and vital needs of others. We must not be dogmatic. Our particular ideals and sense of vital interest are not the only ones in the world. Also, we must recognise that, as was said in the Lansing-Ishii declaration, "territorial propinquity creates special relations between countries." Just because we reject non-co-operation we must not go to the other extreme of assuming that all nations have an equal interest everywhere.

Finally, we must make it clear that we will not be satisfied with getting a piece of paper in exchange for the living reality of collaboration. So long as Great Britain and the Soviet Union think that what our hearts are set on is merely a document which will satisfy us intellectually, then we will never get the real thing.

The immediate difficulty is not external, but internal. We cannot expect our Government to seek to co-operate on world problems unless that is what the American people want and unless they want it sufficiently to be tolerant of results which, in themselves, will often be unsatisfactory. We must change the standard by which we will judge our Government's performance. No administration,

of whatever party, would or could do such things as are here suggested if it is going to be denounced whenever the outcome fails to satisfy wholly America's particular ideals.

How and under what conditions will the needed tolerance be forthcoming? We do not want tolerance which is mere indifference. We do not want tolerance which reflects a conscious abandonment or lowering of ideals. We do not want tolerance which excludes the right freely to speak in aid of ideals. Collaboration must not be bought at that price.

What, then, is this "tolerance" of which we speak, and which alone can make collaboration a living thing? It is not a compromise of our ideals. Rather, it is the acceptance, provisionally, of practical situations which fall short of our ideals. The vital word in that sentence is the word "provisionally." We cannot agree to solutions which fall short of our ideals if thereby we become morally bound to sustain and perpetuate them. That would be stultifying. It is the possibility of *change* which is the bridge between idealism and the practical incidents of collaboration. That possibility is an imperative for Christians who must constantly maintain tension with any worldly order. That is why our Commission, in its statement of a year ago, emphasised that international organisation must not be "designed merely to perpetuate by repression the particular structure of the world which will emerge from the war," but that it must be "designed to seek, from time to time, the change of treaty conditions which may prove unjust." There must be "potentialities for correcting mistakes." Only under such conditions, as we then said, would the Christian forces of the country support organized world collaboration. Also, only under such conditions can there be a popular attitude which will embolden Government to share the responsibility for hard decisions.

FOUR PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT

Thus, there emerge four principles of conduct needed to bring collaboration out of the realm of theory and into that of reality.

1. Our Government should adopt and publicly proclaim its long-range goals. These should stem from our Christian tradition and be such as to inspire and unify us. Without such defined goals we will lack enthusiasm and sense of direction. We will not be able to measure our progress.

2. Our Government should not merely talk about its ideals. It must get down into the arena and fearlessly and skilfully battle for them. It must do so, not merely sporadically, but steadily. It must do so even under conditions such that partial and temporary defeat is inevitable.

3. Our Government must, however, battle for its ideals under conditions such that no particular setback need be accepted as definitive. It must be made clear that collaboration implies not merely a spirit of compromise, but equally a right on the part of every nation to persist in efforts to realize its ideals.

4. Our electorate, demanding the foregoing of its Government, must judge its Government accordingly. It should not judge it merely by the immediate results attained. It must rather judge it by its announced long-term objectives, by whether it works competently to achieve them, and by whether it brings into actual functioning procedures of peaceful change so that the world may evolve away from present harsh necessities. If Government meets those tests, then the electorate should applaud such conduct irrespective of dissatisfaction with immediate results.

As we meet here in conference, we shall be concerning ourselves much with long-range objectives. That is as it should be, for it is of those that we are best qualified to speak. Let us also, however, give thought to how world organisation and our other long-range objectives can be made live realities. There is a dangerous gap between plans and resolutions on paper and their translation into actual practice. We ought to help to close that gap. The difficulties are many and partly beyond the range of our immediate influence. That makes it the more imperative that we exhaust the possibilities that are within ourselves. May it be that we can make more clear for ourselves and for our fellows that idealism is not irreconcilable with the practical incidents of international collaboration? Can we do something towards removing the impression abroad that the American people are primarily interested in perfecting paper plans? Can we do something to allay our Government's obvious fear that it will be harshly and unfairly judged if it goes in for collaboration at the low level of actualities rather than the high level of theory? May it be that, in such ways, we can become a sufficiently greater force for good so that we can decisively tip the balance in favour of a better world?

I hope we shall have time to look into these matters. Christ taught that by self-development we could become channels for God's limitless power. Let us follow that admonition.

Subscriptions—12s. 6d. (\$3.00 in U.S.A. and Canada) for one year. 6s. 6d. for six months (Great Britain and Ireland only). Single copies 6d.; reduction for quantities.

Bound Volume IX (Jan.-Dec., 1944) and **Members' Own Volumes**. There is unavoidable delay, but it is hoped that the binding will shortly be finished.

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THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 20 BALCOMBE STREET, DORSET SQUARE, LONDON, N.W. 1.